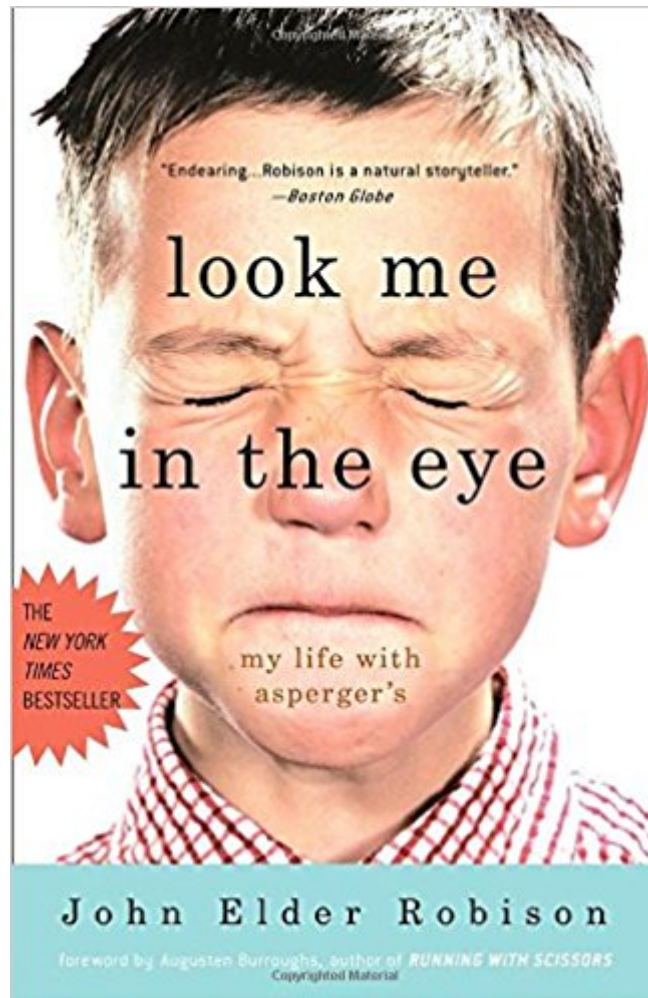




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Look Me In The Eye: My Life With Asperger's



Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • As sweet and funny and sad and true and heartfelt a memoir as one could find. • "from the foreword by Augusten Burroughs Ever since he was young, John Robison longed to connect with other people, but by the time he was a teenager, his odd habits—an inclination to blurt out non sequiturs, avoid eye contact, dismantle radios, and dig five-foot holes (and stick his younger brother, Augusten Burroughs, in them)—had earned him the label of social deviant. • It was not until he was forty that he was diagnosed with a form of autism called Asperger's syndrome. That understanding transformed the way he saw himself and the world. A born storyteller, Robison has written a moving, darkly funny memoir about a life that has taken him from developing exploding guitars for KISS to building a family of his own. It's a strange, sly, indelible account—sometimes alien yet always deeply human.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Robison's thoughtful and thoroughly memorable account of living with Asperger's syndrome is assured of media attention (and sales) due in part to his brother Augusten Burroughs's brief but fascinating description of Robison in *Running with Scissors*. But Robison's story is much more fully detailed in this moving memoir, beginning with his painful childhood, his abusive alcoholic father and his mentally disturbed mother. Robison describes how from nursery school on he could not communicate effectively with others, something his brain is not wired to do, since kids with Asperger's don't recognize common social cues and body language or facial expressions. Failing in

junior high, Robison was encouraged by some audiovisual teachers to fix their broken equipment, and he discovered a more comfortable world of machines and circuits, of muted colors, soft light, and mechanical perfection. This led to jobs (and many hilarious events) in worlds where strange behavior is seen as normal: developing intricate rocket-shooting guitars for the rock band Kiss and computerized toys for the Milton Bradley company. Finally, at age 40, while Robison was running a successful business repairing high-end cars, a therapist correctly diagnosed him as having Asperger's. In the end, Robison succeeds in his goal of helping those who are struggling to grow up or live with Asperger's to see how it is not a disease but a way of being that needs no cure except understanding and encouragement from others. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review If one looked at only Robison's impish sense of humor (he once ordered a blow-up sex doll to be delivered to his junior-high-school teacher's at school), or his success as a classic-car restorer, it might be impossible to believe he has the high-functioning form of autism spectrum disorder called Asperger's syndrome. Clues abound, however, in his account of a youth encompassing serious inability to make and keep friends; early genius at pyrotechnics, electronics, and math; and pet names such as Poodle for his dog and Snort and Varmint for his baby brother. Much later, he calls his wife Unit Two. It is easy to recognize these telltale traits today, but Robison went undiagnosed until he was 40. In the 1960s, he was variously labeled lazy, weird, and, worse, sociopathic. Consequently, his childhood memories too often read like a kid's worst nightmares. Not only did his parents fail to understand the root of his socialization problems but they were also virtually as dysfunctional as the pair Augusten Burroughs portrays in *Running with Scissors* (2002). 'Nough said? Not nearly. Robison's memoir is must reading for its unblinking (as only an Aspergian can) glimpse into the life of a person who had to wait decades for the medical community to catch up with him. Chavez, Donna --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A few of my friends have been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome--a form of autism that largely affects communication and socialization with people, and for a while now, I've started to suspect that I might be an "Aspergian" as well, as I also exhibit some of the traits associated with the diagnosis. After seeing this memoir recommended by a librarian friend, I decided to give it a look, and came away with a whole new perspective and understanding of Aspergers, and the people who are affected by it. Ever since childhood, John Elder Robison longed to connect with other people, but

his odd habits, like blurting out random thoughts, avoiding eye contact, and smiling when one would usually frown, had earned him the label "Asocial deviant." It wasn't until he was forty that he was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, and that new understanding transformed the way he saw himself, as well as the world. From dealing with his parents' abusive habits and struggles with alcohol and mental illness, to pranking everyone in the neighborhood, to developing exploding guitars for KISS and building a family of his own, his life story is both sad, bitter sweet, as well as triumphant, as he learns to connect with the rest of society and be accepted for who and what he is. I haven't read too many memoirs up to this point, but none the less, John's life story is one that anyone, whether you have autism or not, can easily relate to and connect with, as he struggles to understand what makes him "different" from everyone else, and find his place in the world. The way he can make up stories on the spot are always hilarious (in particular, the story he spins about garbage men to confuse and horrify the stuck up, snooty guests at a party he was forced to attend), and the chapters focusing on his time working with KISS was really interesting. I had no clue that virtually one guy was largely responsible for all their most famous stage show stunts and effects. And the final couple chapters, in which he discusses making peace with his parents, and urges the readers to show a bit more compassion and understanding to those we'd class as "weird" or "different" is nothing short of tear jerking. Whether you have some kind of disability or handicap or not, this is one story that I feel everyone should take the time to read, as it sheds a light on the importance of tolerance and acceptance for social outcasts and misfits; told through the eyes of someone who's lived a long and rough, but very interesting life.

I have a grandson that has Aspergers Syndrome. This story really gives you an idea of what it is like for the person with the syndrome. It explains of his problems when very young and how he adapted over the years. My grandson is 14 now and is able to attend public school but, Aspergers people are not good with social skills. Yet, we are finding out that he has a photographic memory and is excellent in math. This book tells me what my grandson is going through in life. We are starting to see some areas that he will blossom in time. It is up to us to accept where he is and work with him. Really enjoyed the story. Wanted to add to my last review. This last year my grandson has really excelled in another area -- baseball. He was selected for a USA team to go to Costa Rica and play. Did very well. Still problems with social skills but he is accepted by others because of the qualities in his math and memory work. Now, sports has made him a star with almost a 600 batting average. Home run king. I wonder if his ability to concentrate helps him to play baseball and hit the pitched balls. At age five we say his problems but now at 14 we are seeing his abilities stand out. Bill Gates

had Aspergers.

Touching story of the author's struggle with and overcoming of Asperger syndrome. Add to that, Robison is the child of an depressed, alcoholic father and mentally ill mother. I learned a lot about Asperger's and found his back story to be interesting, although his writing style can be disjointed. About three quarters of the way through, the book lost me. I found the stories of his experiences with his son to be boring and started skipping over them. Likewise the stuff about his second wife and his new friends really didn't make for compelling reading either. The epilogue about his reconciliation with his dying father is very good and is one of the best passages in the book.

This book is an extremely interesting read, even from a biographical angle. It's also given me a lot of insight into mild autism/Asperger's. My boyfriend recommended this to me when we started dating, as he felt it would help me understand his trains of thought and such better. I ended up finding out that I myself have a lot of the same thought processes, though not to such a degree that it's ever really caused me issue. This book will make you feel a lot of things and it's extremely well written. I highly recommend it to anyone who loves non-fiction or anyone who is interested by the subject.

I wish I had read this 15 years ago when I had my first diagnosed Asperger's children in my classes. This is a worthwhile book to read. It helps the reader understand how people with Asperger's process information and, especially, how they deal with social situations and react in the manner they do. The only part I started skimming through were the chapters that related the stories the author made up for his young child. In my opinion, that part was a little long-winded and I wasn't interested in all the silly stories that, I guess, was trying to show how creative Asperger's people can be.

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